

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY MEETING

1. FIRST MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL OF QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY SINCE CLAUDE RYAN WAS ELECTED LEADER FIVE MONTHS AGO TOOK PLACE IN MONTREAL OVER WEEKEND. MEETING, WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 300 PARTY MEMEBERS, FOCUSED ON APPROPRIATE STRATEGY OF QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY AND ITS LEADER IN ROLE OF OPPOSITION, REORGANIZATION OF PARTY STRUCTURE TO PROMOTE GREATER POLITICAL ACTIVITY AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL, AND PREPARATION FOR FINANCIAL CAMPAIGN TO BEGIN NEXT MONTH WITH ANNOUNCED GOAL OF RAISING DOLS 1.25 MILLION.

2. OF GREATEST INTEREST FROM POLITICAL VIEWPOINT WAS ISSUE OF HOW QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY SHOULD CONDUCT ITSELF ROM NOW ON IN ROLE OF OPPOSITION PARTY. RANK AND FILE OF PARTY HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER TENDENCY OF PARTY TO SUPPORT PQ POSITIONS, SUCH AS SALES TAX ISSUE, WHICH ARE CONSIDERED BY RYAN AND ADVISORS TO BE IN INTEREST OF QUEBEC, BUT WHICH AT SAME TIME ARE SEEN BY MANY AS AIDING PQ.

3. IN SUPPORTING PQ POSITION ON THESE ISSUES, PARTY RANK AND FILE
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FEAR THAT PQ OBJECTIVES WILL BE ENHANCED AND THAT PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF DANGERS OF PQ'S ULTIMATE GOAL OF SEPARATION MAY BE DULLED. SENSE OF MEETING WAS THEREFORE THAT LIBERAL PARTY MUST BECOME MORE COMBATTIVE, MORE CRITICAL TOWARD PQ INITIATIVES, AND MORE CAUTIOUS IN LENDING ITS SUPPORT TO ISSUES THAT REBOUND TO BENEFIT OF PQ, EVEN THOUGH IN ISOLATION THEY MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IN LONGRM INTERESTS OF QUEBEC.

4. WITH REGARD TO ORGANIZATION OF PARTY, AIRM WILL BE TO INVOLVE MEMBERS TO MUCH GREATER DEGREE IN REGIONAL AND LOCAL POLITICAL LIFE. PARTY WILL THUS BE BETTER INFORMED ON ISSUES THAT ARE OF INTEREST AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL, AND CAN BUILD ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF ACTING ON THESE ISSUES. FINANCIAL CAMPAIGN WILL FOLLOW SIMILAR DESIGN, WITH EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL CONTACTS THROUGH TELEPHONE SOLICITATIONS AND DOOR TO DOOR CALLS, RATHER THAN TRADITIONAL FUND RAIDING DINNERS. WITH EXPERIENCE AND CONTACTS GAINED THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURING AND FINANCIAL CAMPAIGN, LIBERAL PARTY LEADERS BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL HAVE ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF TAKING ON PQ IN REFERENDUM AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

5. COMMENT: ONE HIGH PARTY OFFICIAL WITH WHOM WE TALKED DESCRIBED SENSE OF MEETING AS "DISCREET DIRECTIVE" TO RYAN TO BECOME MORE AGGRESSIVE IN HIS DEALINGS WITH PQ AND MORE WARY OF TACTICAL TRAPS WHICH PQ MAY PLACE IN HIS WAY. DIFFICULTY FOR RYAN WILL COME IN ATTEMPTING TO FIND BALANCE WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO PARTY RANK AND FILE WHO SEE COOPERATION WITH PQ AS DANGEROUS AND WHICH AT SAME TIME DOES NOT APPEAR OVERLY NEGATIVE VIZ A VIZ ASPIRATIONS FOR GREATER AUTONOMY THAT ARE SHARED BY MANY QUEBECKERS. NOTWITHSTANDING "DISCREET DIRECTIVES", THERE WA LITTLE DOUBT FOR RYAN WATCHERS OVER THE WEEKEND THAT HE IS FIRMLY IN COMMAND OF PARTY AND THAT BATTLE WOUNDS FROM THE PARTY LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN ARE BEGINNING-ALBEIT SLOWLY- TO HEAL. SUPPORTERS OF RAYMOND GARNEAU, WHO WAS DEFEATED BY RYAN FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY, WERE IN

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ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATED, WE ARE TOLD, IN PARTY DISCUSSIONS.
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